

HABS No. AZ-174-F

Arizona Copper Company, Manager's House
Clifton Townsite
Park Avenue
Clifton
Greenlee County
Arizona

HABS
ARIZ
6-CLIFF
9F-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HAB5
ARIZ
6-CLIFT
9F-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ARIZONA COPPER COMPANY, MANAGER'S HOUSE

HABS No. AZ-174-F

Location:

Clifton Townsite, Park Avenue, Clifton, Greenlee County, Arizona

Significance:

Associated with the Arizona Copper Company and the development of Clifton.

Description:

This two-story mansion sits on a large, lushly-landscaped lot. The parcel is built up from the level of the San Francisco River, which abuts the southwest side of the property, to avoid flooding. A retaining wall of slag blocks from the smelter borders the southwest and southeast sides of the property. A circular driveway enters the property at the northern corner. A wide expanse of ground between the river end the house itself is filled with a lush garden. A wooden pergola leads to a tennis court on the southeast side of the house. The tennis court is surrounded by a wooden fence with Prairie style detailing.

The irregularly-planned house has obvious influences of the arts-and-crafts movement and the Prairie Style, as well as the old-world Scottish origins of its builder, the Arizona Copper Company. The house has a low-pitched hip roof and wide eaves. A corbelled brick course at the second floor level emphasizes the horizontal character of the house in spite of its two-story mass. The wall surfaces are stuccoed and ornamented with decorative half-timbering at the second floor. The plan of the house is roughly L-shaped. The main entrance is located at the southwest front within an arcaded front veranda with Tudor arches and second-story balcony above. A secondary entrance is located within a smaller, but similarly detailed corner porch. The house has several types of wood windows, including double-hung, casement, and fixed sash. Most windows have a group of small glass lights over a single lower light. Several chimneys project up above the roof line. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

History:

This spectacular mansion was constructed in 1913 as the home for the Arizona Copper Company's General Manager, Norman Carmicheel. It was the first of four residences constructed for A.C. Company officials on the east side, the others being residences for the A.C. Company Store Manager, the A.C. Company Store Cashier (purchasing agent), and the A.C. Company Chief Engineer (see HABS No. AZ-174-E).

The construction of new residences for A.C. Company officials was closely tied to the construction of the passenger depot and freight depot for the Arizona and New Mexico Railway (see HABS No. AZ-180). In October of 1912 the A.C. Company announced that it would construct new passenger and freight depots for its railroad subsidiary on the west side of the San Francisco River. The site selected for the depots was occupied by the residences of company officials. In conjunction with its expansion program, the directors of the A.C. Company decided to build new residences on the east side of the river. By February of 1913 workers were removing the old shacks and the baseball

ARIZONA COPPER COMPANY, MANAGER'S HOUSE
HABS No. AZ-174-F (Page 2)

diamond that stood on the east side location. By June of 1913 crews were building a slag wall for protection of the property from flood waters. The area behind the slag wall was filled with sand to bring the area level and create an embankment for flood protection.¹

The contractors for the General Manager's House were Mayfield and Shaw of El Paso, the same contractors who constructed the railroad depots. Charles Jones was the superintendent of construction. A reporter for the Copper Era noted that the new residence would be "of palatial proportions," easily the largest home in Clifton. Measuring 86 by 74 feet, it consisted of twenty rooms of which six were bedrooms, each with its own private bathroom. Each bedroom had its own name and four bedrooms had private verandas. Floors were constructed of quarter-sawn oak and maple. The building included a concrete basement seven feet deep. The exterior was covered with "pebble dash" stucco and the interior plastered. The building also featured "commodious porches and hallways." Other features included two entrance halls, two staircases, a living room, a formal dining room, a library, an activity room, two pantries, and a powder room. To get an idea of the scope of the undertaking, building permits issued by the Town of Clifton indicate that the A.C. Company spent \$28,000 constructing the AZ&NM passenger depot and \$25,000 constructing the General Manager's House. In a 1979 interview, Thomas Sidebotham, who worked on the construction crew, recalled that the A.C. Company erected a bridge across the San Francisco River just to get construction materials to the house. Sidebotham offered an explanation for the luxurious nature of the residence by noting that the company poured money into its construction as a means to avoid taxation by the British government. Funds that were not re-invested in the company would be subject to taxes.²

Following construction of the General Manager's House, the Arizona Copper Company constructed residences for its store manager E.M. Williams and its store purchasing agent (cashier) J.G. Cooper in 1914. It constructed a residence for its chief engineer Spencer Bishop in 1918 (see HABS No. AZ-174-F). These four residences comprised the core of the A.C. Company colony in Clifton. During World War I the grounds of the residences were converted into a victory garden; the General Manager's lawn was planted in potatoes and Williams' with sugar beets. The first resident of the A.C. Company General Manager's House was Norman Carmichael. He lived in the building until the A.C. Company was acquired by Phelps Dodge in 1921. Subsequent Phelps Dodge branch managers who lived in the residence were Joseph Hodgson and Frank Ayer. The building stood vacant during the thirties, seeing only occasional use by visiting Phelps Dodge officials. In 1939 Morenci branch manager Gilbert C. Davis moved into the house, followed by Lyle M. Barker in 1945. Mr. Barker, who retired in 1959, was the last branch manager to live in the house. In the early 1960s the building was remodeled and renovated by Phelps Dodge and designated the Phelps Dodge Guest House. It is still used to house visiting Phelps Dodge officers and guests.³

Sources (endnotes):

1. Copper Era October 25, 1912 (l, 1: 1); February 14, 1913 (l, 1: 6); May 30, 1913 (l, 1: 6); June 6, 1913 (l, 3: 2).
2. Copper Era July 18, 1913 (l, 7: 5); August 15, 1913 (l, 1: 6); Sam Negri, "Clifton Guest House Has Roots in Mining History," Arizona Republic July 15, 1979 (SL, 2: 1-5); Bill Conger, "The Magnificent Morenci Guest House," Morenci Copper Review, n.d., clipping provided by Bill Conger.
3. Copper Era January 16, 1914 (l, 1: 6); August 17, 1917 (l, 1: 3); February 22, 1918 (l, 5: 4); Bill Conger, "The Magnificent Morenci Guest House," Morenci Copper Review, n.d., clipping provided by Bill Conger.

ARIZONA COPPER COMPANY, MANAGER'S HOUSE
HABS No. AZ-174-F (Page 3)

Historian: Robert G. Graham, AIA, Ryden Architects, Historical Architect/Project Coordinator

Douglas Kupel, Consulting Historian

Ryden Architects
645 North 4th Avenue, Suite A
Phoenix, AZ 85003

September, 1994